

World War II Personal Experience Lesson



Background -

The World War II events documented through out *In This Great Struggle* are the personal reflections and experiences of the brave men and women who actually lived it. Their memories have been shared with us in order to preserve them for future generations. It might be easy for students to hear these stories being told by elderly members of our society and dismiss them as the distant relics of a bygone era, but it is important to remember that these men were young when these events took place. Still growing, still finding their way in life. The events of this conflict along with the actions and choices that these young men made during it would go on to shape the rest of their lives, as well as the future of our country. This project is a way for students to get a first hand look at what their own war time experience may have been like while hopefully allowing them to form a greater respect for this past generation in the process.

Overview -

Students will predict their course of action during a fictional WWII conflict. They will begin by filling out the left side of the worksheet which states what they would prefer to do during this war. These are their optimal choices regarding branch of service, location, rank, and outcome. After some background information about the actual war and the exhibit, they will then use dice along with the provided outcome key to randomly generate what actually happens to them during this fictional conflict and fill it out on the right side of the worksheet. A side by side comparison of the results along with what they “wanted” to happen should provide material for meaningful class discussion afterwards using the provided prompt points.

I.) Introduction to assignment and brief WWII background

II.) Part One - Filling in worksheet

- Students should fill in the LEFT side of the worksheet explaining what they would ideally like to do during the war. Answers can be whatever the students want but should be somewhat related to the experiences of WWII soldiers (i.e. no fictional locations or ranks).

- A) Military Branch
- B) European or Pacific Theater
- C) Service Location
- D) Combat Level
- E) Rank
- F) Outcome
- G) Post War Status

III.) Short Discussion

- Students should participate in a brief discussion about the initial expectations of war and how it would effect their lives.

IV.) Part Two - Continuing the worksheet

- Students should now use the dice and Outcome Key to randomly generate what will actually happen to them during this conflict. Follow the key from top to bottom using the letter coded progression to advance according to previously rolled status.

- Certain outcomes are more involved than others, but everyone should be able to complete their path and have a final status by the end of the chart.

- A) Military Branch
- B) European or Pacific Theater
- C) Service Location
- D) Combat Level
- E) Rank

V.) Mail Call Break

- Pause between outcomes E & F in order for the students to turn the page over and complete a short letter or telegram home to the families and loved ones to let them know how things are going.

- Where are you? What is happening at the moment? What is your outlook for the future?

- Students should use this short space to convey their most important communications to their loved ones. This will help them realize and relate to the fact of just how important this form of contact was to the soldiers during the war.

VI.) Part Three - Completing the worksheet

- Students should now once again use the dice and the outcome key to complete the final two questions on the worksheet.

- F) Outcome
- G) Post War Status

VII.) Part Four - Post War Discussion

- Students should use the space at the bottom of the page to briefly explain how the outcome of the war was different from their initial vision. This should prepare them to discuss in depth questions and perspectives about the war and the many people that it affected.

- Lead the class in a group discussion about World War II, the importance of personal actions and their consequences, and the concept of sacrifice and legacy.

- How can we connect these stories to the present? How much of your fate/journey was actually under your control? How does this define your legacy? How would you want others to remember your sacrifice?

Common Core Standards -

Middle School - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.7

Integrate visual information (e.g., in charts, graphs, photographs, videos, or maps) with other information in print and digital texts.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.6-8.4

Determine the meaning of words and phrases as they are used in a text, including vocabulary specific to domains related to history/social studies.

High School - CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.7

Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in diverse formats and media (e.g., visually, quantitatively, as well as in words) in order to address a question or solve a problem.

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.RH.11-12.9

Integrate information from diverse sources, both primary and secondary, into a coherent understanding of an idea or event, noting discrepancies among sources.

IL Standards -

Middle School - SS.H.1.6-8.MC: Use questions generated about individuals and groups to analyze why they, and the developments they shaped, are seen as historically significant

SS.H.4.6-8.LC: Explain multiple causes and effects of historical events.

SS.H.1.6-8.MdC: Analyze connections among events and developments in broader historical contexts.

High School - SS.H.5.9-12: Analyze the factors and historical context that influenced the perspectives of people during different historical eras

SS.H.9.9-12: Analyze the relationship between historical sources and the secondary interpretations made from them.

SS.H.1.9-12: Evaluate how historical developments were shaped by time and place as well as broader historical contexts.